UNITED
NATIONS

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Secretariat

ST/IC/1997/33
29 May 1997

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: CESSATION OF TOBACCO SMOKING AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK*

1. Tobacco smoke in the work environment is recognized as a major and unacceptable pollutant. Recent studies have confirmed the fact that second-hand smoking is a significant cause of cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diseases of the respiratory system. Most substantial exposure to second-hand smoking usually occurs at the workplace. Given the information stated above and recognizing the responsibility of the United Nations for the health and well-being of its employees, administrative instruction ST/AI/407, which restricted smoking to specially designated areas at the premises of Headquarters, was issued on 1 August 1995.

2. The limited impact and efficiency of ST/AI/407 have been closely monitored and recently reviewed by the Medical Services Division of the Office of Human Resources Management, the Buildings Management Service and the Staff Union. Taking into consideration the concerns of the staff of the United Nations, and in order to assure a healthy, tobacco-free working environment, smoking shall be prohibited in the DC and UNITAR buildings effective 1 July 1997, including the cafeteria and sitting space on the third floor of DC1. "No Smoking" signs will be displayed at the building entrances and throughout the premises by the Department of Administration and Management in due course.

3. In the Secretariat Building, smoking remains restricted to the areas designated in ST/AI/407. No smoking is allowed in offices, hallways, restrooms or on the stairs or escalators.

* Personnel Manual index No. 13211.

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4. The success of this policy will depend on the mutual understanding and cooperation of both smokers and non-smokers. It is a moral obligation of all staff members to follow the above policy and share the responsibility for enforcing it. Respect for and courtesy towards fellow staff members requires no less. Exposing colleagues to the danger of passive second-hand smoking has become unacceptable behaviour.

5. All staff members who need assistance to stop smoking are invited to contact the Medical Services Division of the Office of Human Resources Management (extension 3-7080).